

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2010**

5:30 P.M. PROMPT

DINNER AT 5:15 P.M.

- BUDGET HEARING – 5:30 P.M. – FIRE DEPARTMENT
6:30 P.M. – SERVICE DEPARTMENT
7:30 P.M. – RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Bedford City Council met in a work session at Bedford City Hall on Monday, November 8, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Dan Pocek, Warner Batten, Stan Koci, Paula Mizesak, Marilyn Zolata, Greg Pozar, Don Saunders. Also Present: Clerk of Council Kathleen Lynch. Administration: City Manager Henry Angelo, Finance Director Frank Gambosi, Fire Chief Dave Nagy, Service Director Clint Bellar, Recreation Director Randy Lewis and Senior Coordinator Tim Anderson. Absent: Law Director Ken Schuman. Others: Dennis Love and Nick Schkurko.

Mayor Pocek began the Work Session with the budget hearing for the Fire Department.

Chief Nagy gave an overview of the past year. During 2010, an agreement between the Bedford Fire Department and Maple Heights Fire Department began. With the department being short staffed and an increase in call volume, there was serious concern for the safety of personnel. The Chief said our fire department is responding to Maple Heights on a 4:1 basis. This has doubled their reliance from other cities on squad calls. Chief Nagy said the public education programs the department offers are doing very well and have increased over the last year, i.e. CPR, child seat installation, smoke detectors, AED.

Chief Nagy said the department lost a 36 year veteran, a test was given, and they are in the process of replacing that firefighter. The department is applying for a federal grant in 2011 it is for equipment not personnel. In the next 4 to 5 years, the department will be looking to co-purchase a large piece of apparatus with Maple Heights. Also, part of the bond issue will be purchasing a new rescue squad in 2011. The Chief spoke about the rescue in the Metroparks and a recent cardiac arrest incident that took place.

Councilman Koci said on page 54 of the budget asked what do the refunds pertained to. Mr. Gambosi said the ambulance billing company collects for other agencies as well, and sometimes they give the money to the wrong entity and that has to be returned.

Mr. Koci asked about the grant received from the Bedford Eagles. Chief Nagy said that money is typically used to maintain and upgrade fitness equipment in the department. It is an important part of the day at the department, to help reduce injuries, etc. He said last year they did not use much of the money donated by the Eagles. It has not been decided what the money will be used for this year. The Chief said both the Fire and Police Department, through the work of his Asst. Chief and the Ex. Lt. from the Police Dept, made a donation to the Eagles and gave them an AED.

Councilman Koci said on page 68 of the budget there is a drastic cut in overtime. Chief Nagy said overtime increased this year, and a significant amount of that is for required training and certification. It is a part of the collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Gambosi said on page 54, there is a line for overtime in the education line and that part of this will be paid from the ambulance fund.

Councilman Koci asked about a cot that was purchased for \$12,000. Chief Nagy said that three cots were purchased at that price. They assist in lifting the patients, again to help reduce personnel injury.

Councilman Batten said the overtime budget wasn't being cut but transferred to another line. The City Manager said there will be \$85,000 in the overtime budget and an additional \$50,000 from the ambulance billing, for a total of \$135,000.

Councilman Koci said this year overtime is over the budget. He asked how the firefighter retiring will affect overtime in 2011.

Chief Nagy said in 2008 during a presentation to Council, he explained by not replacing those firefighters that left in 2005 and 2006, the overtime would increase. The shifts were then taken from a six man minimum to an eight man minimum, leaving two shifts short of personnel.

Councilman Saunders asked about the levy funds. Mr. Gambosi said per the Ohio Revised Code the levy has to have its own fund. At this time, the fund of \$2.3 million is paying for salaries of Police Department personnel, i.e. Chief, Executive Lt. and all officers. The other personnel in the Police Department are being paid out of the General Fund. Mr. Gambosi said he did set up the fund to work this way for accounting purposes and to relieve the general fund, but that it could also pay for personnel in the Fire Department.

Councilman Saunders asked the Chief about ambulance billing. Chief Nagy said there is a liaison that is working with the compliance department at University Hospital main campus. However, with HIPPA laws the flow of information has been shut off from the hospital to the billing company resulting in less collections. He said Cleveland EMS is down \$5-6 million in billing. Sean McKibben at Bedford Medical Center has been very apologetic and helpful during this situation and has assured the Chief that it will be fixed. Ultimately, the City will get the money for the ambulance services.

Councilman Pozar asked why the information is so difficult to get. Chief Nagy said the ambulance billing company can come to the Fire Department and obtain the information, but then have to confirm it with the corresponding hospital. This is where the difficulty is arising. The Chief said it is unfortunate, but a large number of patients do not know their information, and the job of his department is patient care, not collection of information. Mr. Gambosi said there was a similar issue in the 1990's, but that is was worked out.

Councilman Saunders asked if the department had been approached by those at Bedford Medical Center to start taking patients to the new hospital on Harvard Road. Chief Nagy said no. The emergency department at Bedford Medical Center is only behind UH-main campus as far as volume of patients. They have given no indication that things would be changing. The Chief said they have offered space on the second floor for a regional dispatch center.

Councilman Pozar asked if the regional dispatch center would be modeled after one this is already in the area. Chief Nagy said St. John Westshore hosts the regional dispatch center serving several westside communities. After meeting with all the hospitals in the area about this, Bedford Medical Center was the most interested. However, there is no funding at this time to take it to the next level. Bedford is the most financially stable city in the group of communities that have been discussing it.

Councilwoman Mizesak asked about a charge to a company named Shamrock. The Chief said the department is now utilizing them for the turn-out gear, preventative maintenance.

Mrs. Mizesak asked if the Chief ever received any feedback on the warning system. He said no. Councilwoman Zolata said the department used to be at events/functions doing blood pressure checks, and asked if this is still done. Chief Nagy said the department does not have the personnel to do it anymore. Mrs. Zolata asked if someone came to the station would they do a blood pressure check. He said yes.

Councilman Pozar asked how many total employees the department had. The Chief said besides himself, there is the Assistant Chief, an Administrative Assistant, 24 firefighters and the department budget is responsible for one full-time dispatcher and one part-time dispatcher, so technically 28.5 employees. If Don McKenzie is replaced, 29.5 employees. Councilman Pozar asked the Chief where the department needs to be. The Chief said 31.5.

Councilman Pozar asked about the paramedic levy money on page 40. Mr. Gambosi said it is off by \$13,000. Mr. Pozar said the levy did cover the expenses, but after 12 years there is a deficit in that account. Mr. Gambosi said yes, and explained that the reduction in values of property brings in a lot less money. In addition, there is \$106,000 in the CAD tax account and this will be taken to zero over the next couple of years, and will not be a revenue sources again for the City.

Councilman Pozar said what is the percentage of increase in revenue for this budget. Mr. Gambosi said approximately 2%, but if raises are given to all the employees that will be "eaten up and then some". Mr. Gambosi said unfortunately projections for the next year can drop, especially with State cuts to local funding and property tax decreases.

Councilman Pozar said the Fire Department needs two more firefighters, couldn't that be subsidized. Mr. Gambosi said no, the general fund is already subsidizing the paramedic levy fund. Councilman Pozar said the levy, generating \$2.3 million a year, didn't work. The City is 11 employees down in all departments, and we are unable to return to those levels. Mr. Gambosi said with more revenue from Ben Venue in 2012 maybe then the City could look at staffing levels being what they once were. The budget has been trimmed leaving as much as possible in the funds.

Mayor Pocek said with a new Governor, there is fear that the Local Government Fund will be cut completely. Mr. Gambosi said if that does happen, the City will be down \$660,000.

Councilman Pozar asked about grants the Fire Department has applied for. Chief Nagy said the grant they applied for is not an operational grant, but for equipment – thermal imager.

Councilman Pozar said last year there was \$293,000 in the ambulance fund, and this year it is down \$143,000. Mr. Gambosi said once the ambulance is back on track that number will increase.

Councilman Pozar asked if that money could be used to hire two more firefighters. Mr. Gambosi said no, it will go towards education and equipment. Mr. Pozar said it would cost the City approximately \$186,000 to employee two firefighters.

Mr. Angelo said the Chief wants additional personnel for his department, but has been told by Mr. Gambosi and himself that the City cannot afford it. The position on personnel is to replace those that either retire, or leave for another reason. Mr. Gambosi said there is serious concern about what the State is going to do to make up its deficit. Mr. Angelo said the City would like to have 9 firefighters on each shift, but it is not feasible at this point.

Councilman Pozar asked about fuel used in the department. Mr. Gambosi explained a formula for computing the average usage to budget accordingly. It is a percentage of diesel, unleaded and gallons and will be revisited if gas prices continue to increase.

Councilman Pozar asked about mutual aid in the City. Chief Nagy said the City is receiving more help from other cities than giving because of only running one squad. As of 11/04/10, the Bedford Fire Department has responded 26 times into other cities, and received mutual aid 97 times from other cities. The Chief said in 2007, when the department was at full staff and running two ambulances, those numbers were flipped.

Councilman Pozar has heard there is some abuse of sick time in the department, increasing overtime costs to the City. Chief Nagy said hearing and proving are two different things. The department is down an individual, actually two and sick time tends to just go up. Mr. Pozar said overtime is also given for continuing education, this is something that should be on the table when collective bargaining starts.

Mr. Angelo said \$135,000 in overtime this year, for all issues including education, sick time and vacation. Hiring two more firefighters would cost the City \$186,000, the overtime is cheaper. Councilman Pozar said two firefighters would be better than spending that amount in overtime.

Councilman Koci said it would be better for the City to have two ambulances back on the road. Mr. Pozar said it would, but that the department needs people.

Mr. Gambosi said last year many of the firefighters opted to take compensatory time instead of overtime for their continuing education requirements. This year they have chosen to take the overtime, there will always be that fluctuation.

Councilman Pozar said the compensatory time policy needs to be addressed throughout the City. Chief Nagy said the choice of either compensatory or overtime is in the collective bargaining agreement. It is his belief that the spike in overtime this year is due to the concessions his staff gave last year. They didn't get a raise and this is their way of addressing it. Mr. Angelo said the overtime costs have been consistent, whether they did it for that reason or not.

Councilman Pozar said the City is providing service to Maple Heights on a 3:1 basis. The department needs to be brought up to full force, to increase their revenue. That should be our goal.

The budget hearing for the Fire Department was concluded.

At this time, the budget hearing for the Service Department began. Service Director Clint Bellar gave a brief summation of the year. The department has been doing more with less, and will continue to do what they can with what they have. Al Thomas was brought back on a part-time basis to do the lights at the Square.

Councilman Pozar said traditionally projected objectives are discussed, any new programs or functions being implemented. Mr. Bellar said with the man power the way it is, it will remain status quo at this point. Mr. Angelo said Mr. Bellar was told to start looking to replace Mr. Dickard, but is still down employees.

Mr. Bellar said typically by this time the part-time employees have their hours reduced to 20 per week. However, he spoke with the Union President and it was agreed that full-time hours could be continued until leaves are done.

Councilwoman Zolata said the crews are doing a great job on the leaf pick-up, and they are always polite when she sees them.

Councilman Pozar asked if there are any issues at the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Bellar said the bond issue the City recently had will be addressing many of the issues. The only current issue is the door needs to be replaced for the new sludge truck. The truck goes two times a week to Barberton to dispose of the waste. Mr. Angelo said a larger door is more feasible than a smaller truck. Also, one retiree has recently been replaced.

Mr. Bellar said the new water bills will be mailed beginning in January. They will not be post cards, but letter type bills, it will increase postage approximately \$10,000 per year. Mrs. Zolata asked if the City of Cleveland has raised their rates. Mr. Angelo said they are in the process of trying to establish a reserve fund, but it does not look like that is going to happen.

Councilwoman Zolata asked if the City could do some of the really bad sidewalks in the City. Mr. Bellar said the issue with that is once one is done, then everyone will call to have them done. Since the City no longer is doing the sidewalk program, it is the responsibility of the homeowner.

Councilwoman Mizesak asked about Davey Tree. Mr. Bellar said they have put in 59 trees this year.

Councilman Saunders asked if any hydrants were being replaced this year. Mr. Bellar said Shawn Francis has worked hard and is doing what he can. Mr. Saunders said a maple tree on the corner of Logan and Ennis may need to be cut down. Mr. Bellar said if there is a tree declining in the top, he calls Empire to get their recommendation on whether or not it should be cut down.

Councilman Saunders said there are no curbs on Ennis and when it rains the treelawns get washed into the street and down the hill. Mr. Bellar said it is costly to do curbs, but he will make note of it and hopefully something can be done next year. Mr. Saunders said the department is doing a good job.

Councilman Batten asked about the water main on Grand Blvd. Mr. Bellar said that is one of the streets that will be getting a new water main as part of the bond project. Mr. Batten said on page 4, in professional services, there is \$188,000, but there was not much of that used, is it necessary to have that much in the account. Mr. Bellar said tree removal is part of that account and depending on what is actually needed it could be less, or close to that amount.

Councilman Koci asked what the size of the department was. Mr. Bellar said the same as last year. Mr. Koci asked about the new secretary. Mr. Bellar said Kathie is doing a great job.

Councilwoman Mizesak asked about 350 Turney Road and if there were any issues with flooding lately. Mr. Bellar was not aware there was a problem in that area, and has not received any information on that.

Councilman Saunders asked if the ash trees are being treated. Mr. Bellar said no, but they are attempting to get a grant for tree removal and replacement.

Councilman Koci asked Mr. Bellar to clarify the rules on sewer call outs. Mr. Bellar said they are still available Monday through Friday during normal working hours. They will come out on Saturday between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Councilwoman Zolata asked if Union Street at the dip is on the list of items to be corrected. Mr. Bellar said it is an issue that needs to be taken care of and is a priority.

The budget hearing of the Service Department was concluded.

At this time, the budget hearing for the Recreation Department began. Mr. Lewis began with a brief summary of the previous year. The department is still at the same staffing levels as it was last year. A new truck will be purchased this year replacing a 1998 truck. They are also going to continue the community garden, which was started with a grant for \$5,000. The garden can hold between 34 and 48 plots, depending on how large they are.

Councilman Koci asked how a resident would get a plot. Mr. Lewis said there were two meetings held and sign ups were taken there. The plots are 10x20 and because it was a grant there was no charge.

Mr. Anderson said the City plowed the garden and put sweet peat down, a shed was built for individuals to keep their tools in. A waterline was installed to provide hoses.

Mr. Anderson had a professor from the Ohio State Agriculture extension facility come and speak to the gardeners. She indicated that next year the soil should be treated, and volunteered to speak with the teachers in the school district as a project with their students. She also said the garden should be turned over to the gardeners as soon as possible.

The Mayor asked if there were any issues with deer, or with water being taken from the garden. Mr. Anderson said there were very little problems with deer, and the water pilferage was a non-issue.

Mr. Lewis discussed the summer baseball program. This year Bedford Heights joined, bringing an additional 125 children. Between Bedford, Bedford Heights, Walton Hills, Maple Heights and Garfield Heights, there were a total of 688 children. They are becoming the regional hub for baseball.

Mr. Anderson discussed the revenue at the pool. He said the pool was grossly under enrolled for the learn to swim program. He thinks, that like baseball, this is becoming more a school district thing and would like to offer those communities the ability to sign up for the learn to swim program. It would generate more money and keep the cost low.

Councilman Pozar asked what the cost of the program is. Mr. Anderson said it is \$20 per session, or \$1.25 per lesson. Mr. Anderson said the feeling of Council is not to open the season passes to the pool to non-residents. However, it would generate a large amount of additional revenue.

Mr. Lewis said if Council does not want to allow non-resident passes, but would allow a non-resident fee for the lessons, it would help.

Mayor Pocek said this is the fourth year with the new pool and asked how it is. Mr. Anderson said it is definitely better to maintain and much easier to open and close.

Councilman Saunders asked about the field at Ellenwood, there is always an issue with water on the visitor side. Mr. Lewis said it has been excavated and stone put in. A portion of the asphalt was cut out also, which seems to have helped.

Mr. Saunders asked if there were any plans to replace the backstop. Mr. Lewis said the way it was planned it was put farther back then it should have been, so the net was put up. However, it would cost \$10,000 to replace it, and that is not feasible this year.

Councilwoman Mizesak asked how many employees have the title, commissioner. Mr. Lewis said there is a baseball commissioner and a softball commissioner. She asked about the lights at Hutchinson Park, there have been some complaints from residents in that area. Mr. Lewis said unfortunately those have to be physically turned on and off, they are not on a timer.

Councilwoman Zolata asked about the skateboard park. Mr. Lewis said there have been no issues, and the cost for a pass is still \$3.00. Mrs. Zolata asked if the seniors still took bus trips and if so, how much does the City contribute. Mr. Lewis said the City subsidizes approximately \$200 a trip, \$1,200 a year.

Councilwoman Zolata asked Mr. Anderson if there is a senior that needs assistance through the program with Light of Hearts what is the best way to do that. Mr. Anderson said if possible, to have the resident call him directly and once the information is gathered they can proceed appropriately.

Mrs. Zolata asked about the children's summer playground program. Mr. Lewis said it went well, about 50% of the children are receiving a free lunch, much like the program at the schools.

Mrs. Zolata asked about uniform rentals that are on page 35. Mr. Lewis said that is for the employees, they use Cintas. She asked what the \$800 for education was for. Mr. Lewis said seminars.

Mr. Anderson said there are plans for next summer, where the employees of the concession stand at Ellenwood and the pool will work both places.

Councilwoman Zolata asked about the playground at Interstate Park. Mr. Lewis said it is in, and the wood chips are being installed Wednesday.

Councilman Pozar asked how many full-time employees the Recreation Department has. Mr. Lewis said six. Mr. Pozar asked how many families participate in the monthly food program. Mr. Lewis said last Friday there were 114 families.

Councilman Pozar said if the City extended passes for the pool to employees or business owners, that money could be used to serve more people with the food program. Mr. Anderson said the issue with business owners is that daycares call every summer wanting to bring children to the pool. The concern is that there will not be adequate staff that comes with them to watch the children. It would be very difficult on the staff if that were the case. Mr. Pozar said maybe those can be dealt with on a case by case basis. He asked where the natural gas drilling project was at. Mr. Gambosi said it is stopped because they do not have the 400 feet authorization.


Councilman Pozar asked about the concession stand at Ellenwood, could it be open all day to provide lunch, etc. rather than just sporadically. Mr. Lewis said the concession stand was built to be a convenience for residents watching games at the field. Mr. Anderson said it has never been used as a revenue generator.

Councilman Pozar said the Recreation Department operates on \$1.1 million out of the general fund, and only generates approximately 1/5 of that. It costs residents approximately \$18 per month per house to have a Recreation Department. The department runs on a shoestring and they do a very good job.

Mr. Anderson said the senior club is changing and evolving. The members are becoming older, and they are struggling to find officers to run the club. The numbers of new, younger members has not increased and the department has to do a lot more to help run the club. Mr. Anderson said they have two lunch meetings a month and the gentleman that has been doing those for the last 8 years is stepping down. There are a couple of ladies that help him, but they are not able to do it regularly.

Councilwoman Mizesak asked if a catered lunch would be more appropriate for them. Councilman Pozar said if \$5,000 was given to the senior club to help reimburse those people that do the lunches, maybe there would be more volunteers. Mayor Pocek asked if the members of Council agreed. All members voted to give \$5,000 to the senior club.

Work Session was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.


Clerk of Council
Mayor - President of Council